

A STRATEGY FOR FOCUSING YOUR DATA INVENTORY

The purpose of the following strategy is to help you determine what data will be **MOST** relevant to have and use. Think about the mission of your school and your school planning needs as you review the four suggestions for focusing your data inventory. Discuss each of these, decide which are a focus for your school and then review the data sources in the inventory to see which apply to your focus.

1. **Determine what data are *readily available*.** Identify data that you already have or are easy to collect.
2. **Identify the data needed to address your *School Improvement Plan goals, objectives, and strategies*.** Achievement and demographic data are often the most needed for monitoring and evaluating school goals; however, other types of data are equally important in investigating root causes that need to be addressed in the school improvement process. These data should become the heart of your school data profile.
3. **If you want to evaluate the *effectiveness of a program*, pose key questions that must be answered to determine the data needed.** Program evaluations often require a host of data about the participants, program, and outcomes, for example:
 - program goals and objectives, purpose, and rationale;
 - participant selection criteria;
 - implementation plans, timelines, and data;
 - program participants and relevant demographic information; and
 - outcome data such as achievement scores, perceptions, and/or observations.
4. **If you have identified a *problem area* (e.g., increase in behavior problems, increased dropout rate),** determine the specific data needed to investigate the problem. Inquiry into a problem situation is one of the ways to focus a data inventory.